A BILL FOR AN ACT

CONCERNING THE ROLE AND MISSION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES.

Bill Summary

(Note: This summary applies to this bill as introduced and does not reflect any amendments that may be subsequently adopted. If this bill passes third reading in the house of introduction, a bill summary that applies to the reengrossed version of this bill will be available at http://www.leg.state.co.us/billsummaries.)

The bill allows the state board for community colleges and occupational education (state board) to seek approval from the Colorado commission on higher education (CCHE) for technical, career, and workforce development bachelor of applied science degree programs that may be offered at community colleges within the state system. Among other things, the state board must show workforce and student demand for the degree program and cost-effectiveness to the student and the system.
The CCHE may approve bachelor of applied science degree programs that meet criteria established in the bill. Among other factors, the CCHE shall consider whether the bachelor of applied science degree program proposed by the state board is sufficiently distinguishable from an existing degree program at a state 4-year institution of higher education in the community college's geographic service area or whether the degree program could be delivered in the community college's service area through a statewide transfer agreement with a state 4-year institution of higher education. The state board may then authorize the establishment of an approved bachelor of applied science degree program at a community college within the state system.

Additionally, CCHE may approve technical, career, and workforce development bachelor of applied science degree programs at Aims community college after considering the same factors as those that apply to the approval of bachelor of applied science degree programs at other community colleges. Among other things, Aims community college must demonstrate workforce and student demand for the degree program and cost-effectiveness to the student and to Aims community college. The bill expands the role and mission of Aims community college to permit the bachelor of applied science degree programs.

Finally, the bill expands the role and mission of Western state Colorado university to allow the university to provide basic skills courses directly in Chaffee and Gunnison counties and to receive resident credit for those basic skills courses.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Colorado:

SECTION 1. Legislative declaration. (1) The general assembly hereby finds and declares that:

(a) It is a priority in Colorado to afford the citizens in rural and urban areas of the state greater access to higher education;

(b) Four-year bachelor of applied science degrees are of increasing importance in enabling individuals to qualify for and obtain jobs;

(c) Offering bachelor of applied science degrees in high-demand fields in the regions of the state is important to meeting the local economic development needs and is critical to reducing the educational
attainment gap between urban and rural areas;

(d) Offering bachelor of applied science degrees at community colleges will:

(I) Provide an opportunity for underserved and first generation students to continue their educational pathway in a familiar community college setting, thus making it more likely these students will persist and complete their degrees;

(II) Further the goal of closing the educational attainment gap between the majority and minority populations, as more than half of all minority students attend community colleges;

(III) Further the Colorado commission on higher education's master plan goal to increase the attainment of high-quality post-secondary credentials across all academic disciplines and throughout Colorado by at least 1,000 new certificates and degrees each year in order to meet the anticipated workforce demands and to enhance access to, and through, post-secondary education to ensure that the system reflects the changing demographics of the state; and

(IV) Provide affordable access to a four-year degree at a time when the general assembly is concerned about tuition increases and student debt levels.

(2) It is therefore in the best interests of the state of Colorado, with certain limitations, to allow community colleges within the state system to offer four-year bachelor of applied science degrees.

SECTION 2. In Colorado Revised Statutes, amend 23-60-201 as follows:

23-60-201. State system of community and technical colleges established - local district colleges - role and mission. There is hereby
established a state system of community and technical colleges which
shall be under the management and jurisdiction of the state board for
community colleges and occupational education. The mission of the
community colleges shall be to serve Colorado residents who reside in
their service areas by offering a broad range of general, personal,
vocational CAREER, and technical education programs. EXCEPT AS
PROVIDED IN SECTION 23-60-211, each college shall be a two-year college.
Each community college may offer two-year degree programs with or
without academic designation, AND, UPON APPROVAL OF THE BOARD
PURSUANT TO SECTION 23-60-211, MAY OFFER TECHNICAL, CAREER, AND
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BACHELOR OF APPLIED SCIENCE DEGREE
PROGRAMS. No college shall impose admission requirements upon any
student. The objects of the community and technical colleges shall be to
provide educational programs to fill the occupational needs of youth and
adults in CAREER AND technical and vocational fields, two-year transfer
educational programs to qualify students for admission to the junior year
at other colleges and universities, basic skills, workforce development,
and a broad range of personal and vocational CAREER education for
adults, AND TECHNICAL, CAREER, AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
BACHELOR OF APPLIED SCIENCE DEGREE PROGRAMS ESTABLISHED
PURSUANT TO SECTION 23-60-211, THAT ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF THE
COMMUNITY WITHIN EACH COMMUNITY COLLEGE SERVICE AREA.

SECTION 3. In Colorado Revised Statutes, 23-60-211, add (4)
as follows:

23-60-211. Degrees. (4) NOTWITHSTANDING THE PROVISIONS OF
SECTION 23-5-129 (6) (b), SUBJECT TO THE APPROVAL OF THE COLORADO
COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION PURSUANT TO SECTION 23-1-133, THE
BOARD MAY ESTABLISH AT COMMUNITY COLLEGES WITHIN THE STATE SYSTEM TECHNICAL, CAREER, AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BACHELOR OF APPLIED SCIENCE DEGREE PROGRAMS. NOTHING IN THIS SECTION SHALL BE CONSTRUED TO ALLOW FOR THE APPROVAL OF BACHELOR OF ARTS OR BACHELOR OF SCIENCE DEGREE PROGRAMS.

SECTION 4. In Colorado Revised Statutes, add 23-1-133 as follows:

23-1-133. Commission directive - bachelor of applied science degree programs - community colleges - approval. (1) (a) The State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education, referred to in this section as the "State Board", shall submit to the Commission for its approval technical, career, and workforce development bachelor of applied science degree programs to be offered at one or more community colleges within the state system. The Commission shall consider the following criteria in determining whether to approve a bachelor of applied science degree program:

(I) Whether the State Board provides data demonstrating workforce and student demand for the degree program;

(II) The regional and professional accreditation requirements for the degree program, if applicable, and whether the college can satisfy those requirements, as appropriate, at both the institutional and program levels;

(III) Whether the State Board can demonstrate that providing the degree program within the community college system is cost-effective for the student and the community college system;
(IV) Whether the state board can demonstrate that the degree program is sufficiently distinguishable from:

(A) An existing degree program at a state four-year institution of higher education that is provided to a student who resides in the community college's geographic service area, as defined by the commission pursuant to section 23-1-109 (2), without the student having to change his or her residence; or

(B) A degree program that has been successfully offered previously in conjunction with a state four-year institution of higher education, which degree program will be reinstated sooner than the degree program could be offered by the community college; and

(V) Whether the bachelor of applied science degree program could be provided through a statewide transfer agreement pursuant to section 23-1-108 (7) with an accredited state four-year institution in the community college's geographic service area or with an accredited state four-year institution of higher education that has a statewide service area, as defined by the commission pursuant to section 23-1-109 (2), that will deliver an existing bachelor of applied science program in the community college's geographic service area sooner than the degree program could be offered by the community college.

(b) In addition, in determining whether to approve a bachelor of applied science degree program, the commission:

(I) Shall consider whether the state board has met the criteria set forth in subparagraphs (I) to (IV) of paragraph (a) of
THIS SUBSECTION (1) AND WHETHER THE PROPOSED BACHELOR OF APPLIED
SCIENCE DEGREE PROGRAM IS IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE STATE OF
COLORADO;

(II) SHALL CONSULT WITH THE STATE BOARD AND STATE
FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION CONCERNING WHETHER
THE COLLABORATION DESCRIBED IN SUBPARAGRAPH (V) OF PARAGRAPH
(a) OF THIS SUBSECTION (1) IS FEASIBLE; AND

(III) MAY CONSULT WITH ANY STATE FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTION OF
HIGHER EDUCATION THAT SHARES THE SAME GEOGRAPHIC SERVICE AREA,
AS DEFINED BY THE COMMISSION PURSUANT TO SECTION 23-1-109 (2),
CONCERNING THE PROPOSED DEGREE PROGRAM TO INFORM THE
COMMISSION OF ANY ANTICIPATED SYSTEMWIDE EFFECTS OF THE NEW
DEGREE PROGRAM.

(2) (a) IN DETERMINING WHETHER TO APPROVE A BACHELOR OF
APPLIED SCIENCE DEGREE PROGRAM FOR AIMS COMMUNITY COLLEGE
PURSUANT TO SECTION 23-71-102, THE COMMISSION SHALL CONSIDER THE
FOLLOWING CRITERIA:

(I) WHETHER AIMS COMMUNITY COLLEGE PROVIDES DATA
DEMONSTRATING WORKFORCE AND STUDENT DEMAND FOR THE DEGREE
PROGRAM;

(II) THE REGIONAL AND PROFESSIONAL ACCREDITATION
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE PROGRAM, IF APPLICABLE, AND WHETHER
THE COLLEGE CAN SATISFY THOSE REQUIREMENTS, AS APPROPRIATE, AT
BOTH THE INSTITUTIONAL AND PROGRAM LEVELS;

(III) WHETHER AIMS COMMUNITY COLLEGE CAN DEMONSTRATE
THAT PROVIDING THE DEGREE PROGRAM WITHIN ITS SERVICE AREA IS
COST-EFFECTIVE FOR THE STUDENT AND AIMS COMMUNITY COLLEGE;
(IV) WHETHER AIMS COMMUNITY COLLEGE CAN DEMONSTRATE THAT THE DEGREE PROGRAM IS SUFFICIENTLY DISTINGUISHABLE FROM:

(A) AN EXISTING DEGREE PROGRAM AT A STATE FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION THAT IS PROVIDED TO A STUDENT WHO RESIDES IN AIMS COMMUNITY COLLEGE’S GEOGRAPHIC SERVICE AREA, AS DEFINED BY THE COMMISSION PURSUANT TO SECTION 23-1-109 (2), WITHOUT THE STUDENT HAVING TO CHANGE HIS OR HER RESIDENCE; OR

(B) A DEGREE PROGRAM THAT HAS BEEN SUCCESSFULLY OFFERED PREVIOUSLY IN CONJUNCTION WITH A STATE FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION, WHICH DEGREE PROGRAM WILL BE REINSTATED SOONER THAN THE DEGREE PROGRAM COULD BE OFFERED BY THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE; AND

(V) WHETHER THE BACHELOR OF APPLIED SCIENCE DEGREE PROGRAM COULD BE PROVIDED THROUGH A STATEWIDE TRANSFER AGREEMENT PURSUANT TO SECTION 23-1-108 (7) WITH AN ACCREDITED STATE FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTION IN AIMS COMMUNITY COLLEGE’S GEOGRAPHIC SERVICE AREA OR WITH AN ACCREDITED STATE FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION THAT HAS A STATEWIDE SERVICE AREA, AS DEFINED BY THE COMMISSION PURSUANT TO SECTION 23-1-109 (2), THAT WILL DELIVER AN EXISTING BACHELOR OF APPLIED SCIENCE PROGRAM IN AIMS COMMUNITY COLLEGE’S GEOGRAPHIC SERVICE AREA SOONER THAN THE DEGREE PROGRAM COULD BE OFFERED BY AIMS COMMUNITY COLLEGE.

(b) IN ADDITION, IN DETERMINING WHETHER TO APPROVE A BACHELOR OF APPLIED SCIENCE DEGREE PROGRAM, THE COMMISSION:

(I) SHALL CONSIDER WHETHER AIMS COMMUNITY COLLEGE HAS MET THE CRITERIA SET FORTH IN SUBPARAGRAPHS (I) TO (IV) OF
PARAGRAPH (a) OF THIS SUBSECTION (2) AND WHETHER THE PROPOSED
BACHELOR OF APPLIED SCIENCE DEGREE PROGRAM IS IN THE BEST
INTERESTS OF THE STATE OF COLORADO;

(II) SHALL CONSULT WITH AIMS COMMUNITY COLLEGE AND STATE
FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION CONCERNING WHETHER
THE COLLABORATION DESCRIBED IN SUBPARAGRAPH (V) OF PARAGRAPH
(a) OF THIS SUBSECTION (2) IS FEASIBLE; AND

(III) MAY CONSULT WITH ANY STATE FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTION OF
HIGHER EDUCATION THAT SHARES THE SAME GEOGRAPHIC SERVICE AREA,
AS DEFINED BY THE COMMISSION PURSUANT TO SECTION 23-1-109 (2),
CONCERNING THE PROPOSED DEGREE PROGRAM TO INFORM THE
COMMISSION OF ANY ANTICIPATED SYSTEMWIDE EFFECTS OF THE NEW
DEGREE PROGRAM.

SECTION 5. In Colorado Revised Statutes, 23-1-108, amend (7)
(a) and (7) (b) as follows:

23-1-108. Duties and powers of the commission with regard to
systemwide planning. (7) (a) The commission shall establish, after
consultation with the governing boards of institutions, and enforce
statewide degree transfer agreements between two-year and four-year
state institutions of higher education and among four-year state
institutions of higher education. Governing boards and state institutions
of higher education shall implement the statewide degree transfer
agreements and the commission policies relating to the statewide degree
transfer agreements. The statewide degree transfer agreements shall
include provisions under which state institutions of higher education shall
accept all credit hours of acceptable course work for automatic transfer
from an associate of arts, ASSOCIATE OF APPLIED SCIENCE, or associate of
science degree program in another state institution of higher education in Colorado. The commission shall have final authority in resolving transfer disputes.

(b) (I) A student who completes an associate of arts, ASSOCIATE OF APPLIED SCIENCE, or associate of science degree that is the subject of a statewide degree transfer agreement and who transfers from the state institution of higher education that awarded the degree to a four-year state institution of higher education shall, if admitted, be enrolled with junior status. Successful completion of an associate of arts, ASSOCIATE OF APPLIED SCIENCE, or associate of science degree does not guarantee the degree holder admission to a four-year state institution of higher education.

(II) A state institution of higher education that admits as a junior a student who holds an associate of arts degree, ASSOCIATE OF APPLIED SCIENCE DEGREE, or associate of science degree that is the subject of a statewide degree transfer agreement may not require the student to complete any additional credit hours of lower-division general education courses; except that the institution may require the student to complete additional lower-division general education courses if necessary for preparation in the degree program in which the student enrolls so long as the additional courses are consistent with published degree program requirements for native students and do not extend the time to degree completion beyond that required for native students in the same degree program. ALL CREDIT HOURS OF ACCEPTABLE COURSE WORK COMPLETED BY A STUDENT WHO HOLDS AN ASSOCIATE OF APPLIED SCIENCE DEGREE THAT IS THE SUBJECT OF A STATEWIDE DEGREE TRANSFER AGREEMENT AND WHO TRANSFERS FROM THE STATE INSTITUTION OF HIGHER
EDUCATION THAT AWARDED THE ASSOCIATE DEGREE TO A STATE
FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION SHALL BE APPLICABLE
ONLY TO A BACHELOR OF APPLIED SCIENCE DEGREE PROGRAM, EXCEPT FOR
COURSES THAT ARE SUBJECT TO TRANSFER PURSUANT TO OTHER TRANSFER
AGreements.

SECTION 6. In Colorado Revised Statutes, 23-1-113.3, amend
(2) (a) and (3) introductory portion as follows:

23-1-113.3. Commission directive - basic skills courses.
(2) (a) Adams state university, Colorado Mesa university, Western
State Colorado university in Chaffee and Gunnison Counties, any
local community college, and any community college governed by the
state board for community colleges and occupational education may offer
basic skills courses, as defined in section 23-1-113 (11) (b), and receive
stipend payments from the state on behalf of eligible undergraduate
students, as defined in section 23-18-102 (5), enrolled in basic skills
courses.
(3) The state board for community colleges and occupational
education, local community colleges, Adams state university, and
Colorado Mesa university, and Western State Colorado university
shall:

SECTION 7. In Colorado Revised Statutes, amend 23-56-101 as
follows:

23-56-101. University established - role and mission. There is
hereby established a university at Gunnison, which shall be known as
Western state Colorado university. Western state Colorado university
shall be a general baccalaureate institution with moderately selective
admission standards. Western state Colorado university shall offer
undergraduate liberal arts and sciences, teacher preparation, and business
degree programs, BASIC SKILLS COURSES RECEIVING RESIDENT CREDIT
PURSUANT TO SECTION 23-1-113.3, and a limited number of graduate
programs. Western state Colorado university shall also serve as a regional
education provider.

SECTION 8. In Colorado Revised Statutes, amend 23-71-102 as
follows:

23-71-102. Definitions. As used in this article, unless the context
otherwise requires:

(1) (a) "Junior college" means an educational institution that
provides not more than two years of training in the arts, sciences, and
humanities beyond the twelfth grade of the public high school curriculum
or vocational education and that conducts occupational, technical, and
community service programs, with no term limitations, and general
education, including college transfer programs, with unrestricted
admissions. except that

(b) NOTWITHSTANDING THE PROVISIONS OF PARAGRAPH (a) OF
THIS SUBSECTION (1):

(I) Colorado mountain college, in addition to its mission as a
junior college, may also offer no more than five baccalaureate degree
programs as its board of trustees determines appropriate to address the
needs of the communities within its service area and that are approved by
the Colorado commission on higher education.

(II) AIMS COMMUNITY COLLEGE, IN ADDITION TO ITS MISSION AS
A JUNIOR COLLEGE, MAY ALSO OFFER BACHELOR OF APPLIED SCIENCE
DEGREE PROGRAMS AS ITS BOARD OF TRUSTEES DETERMINES APPROPRIATE
TO ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITIES WITHIN ITS SERVICE AREA
THAT ARE APPROVED BY THE COLORADO COMMISSION OF HIGHER
PURSUANT TO THE CRITERIA SET FORTH IN SECTION 23-1-133 (2).

SECTION 9. Act subject to petition - effective date. This act
takes effect at 12:01 a.m. on the day following the expiration of the
ninety-day period after final adjournment of the general assembly (August
6, 2014, if adjournment sine die is on May 7, 2014); except that, if a
referendum petition is filed pursuant to section 1 (3) of article V of the
state constitution against this act or an item, section, or part of this act
within such period, then the act, item, section, or part will not take effect
unless approved by the people at the general election to be held in
November 2014 and, in such case, will take effect on the date of the
official declaration of the vote thereon by the governor.